

Submitted by  
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**STATEMENT OF THE  
MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.  
TO THE  
HOUSE HEALTH POLICY COMMITTEE**

**September 13, 2012**

We wish to thank the sponsors of HB 5697 and SB 1122 and this committee for the concern for the health and welfare of youth athletes; and we wish especially to acknowledge the work of Representative Hooker over many months to bring attention to this topic and to thoughtfully guide legislation to what is before the committee today, which the Michigan High School Athletic Association supports.

Before addressing the MHSAA efforts in this area, here's a little background on our organization. The MHSAA is a private nonprofit organization consisting of 1,535 member junior high/middle schools and high schools, both public and nonpublic. Our member schools do not pay dues to belong to the MHSAA and they pay no entry fees to participate in MHSAA tournaments. The MHSAA is completely funded through gate receipts from our tournaments and some modest broadcast, royalty and sponsorship arrangements. No taxpayer dollars are used to fund any of our activities.

The MHSAA has been concerned for many years with the need for heightened awareness of concussions. For example:

- In 2000 the laminated card "Head Injury Guide for Trainers and Coaches," provided by St. Johns Health Systems, was distributed in quantities to every MHSAA member school.
- The following fall, 20,000 laminated "Management of Concussions in Sports" cards, a joint project of the American Academy of Neurology and the Brain Injury Association of Michigan, were distributed to schools.
- In 2002 the "See What You Hit" video of the Spine in Sports Foundation was shown at all MHSAA Football Rules Meetings and sent free of charge to all MHSAA football schools.
- In the summer of 2005 the video "Concussions and Second Impact Syndrome" was provided at no cost to every MHSAA member high school.
- In the fall of 2007 the DVD "Sports Head Injury," a project of Henry Ford Health Systems, was provided to every MHSAA member junior high/middle school and high school.

All of this and many other efforts have been provided at no cost to our member schools, and continue to be provided at no cost to these cash-strapped schools.

In 2010, the MHSAA adopted strong return-to-play protocols for students with concussions and suspected of being concussed. Under our rule, any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion must be removed from competition. Furthermore, our rule clearly states that if a student is removed from play due to a suspected concussion, that student cannot return to play that day and must be cleared in writing by an MD or DO prior to returning on any later day. Additionally, our rule has strong enforcement mechanism: if a school allows a concussed student to return to play without the written authorization of an MD or DO, that is the same as playing an ineligible athlete and results in forfeiture of the contest. The rule applies to all 28 sports served by the MHSAA for its member schools, both public and nonpublic.

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The MHSAA's website, which is MHSAA.com, posts training tools for athletes, parents and coaches, including those of the Centers for Disease Control, and three free online concussion courses – one from CDC, one from the National Federation of State High School Associations and the third from Michigan NeuroSport at the University of Michigan. We are constantly evolving on this issue to provide coaches, parents and students the best information available.

During this school year, just as last school year, nearly 20,000 high school coaches and officials will complete a rules meeting requirement that, beyond basic playing rules, is dominated by information regarding head trauma prevention, recognition and after care. The "Parent's Guide to Concussion in Sports" has been widely distributed to school administrators, coaches, students and parents.

The MHSAA has been both connected to and twice honored by the outstanding Brain Injury Association of Michigan for activities related to concussion awareness and prevention.

Finally, we wish to remind everyone that this is not merely a football issue. For us, it's also an issue for soccer, ice hockey, wrestling, lacrosse and almost every sport we serve. Furthermore, this issue is but one of several compelling health and safety issues in school sports that deserve our attention and must receive it every year to help local schools whose resources have been so severely impacted in recent years. Thank you for the invitation to contribute to today's hearing.